



January 23, 2025

The Honorable Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: MDOT Application for the Sparking New Life into Maine's Star City Project Under the FY 2025 RAISE Grant Program

Dear Secretary of Transportation,

On behalf of the Presque Isle Housing Authority, I would like to express support for the Maine Department of Transportation's application for an FY 2025 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant to improve pedestrian, vehicle, and bicycle transportation in the downtown area of Presque Isle.

The "Sparking New Life into Maine's Star City Project" will enhance much needed safety and accessibility for pedestrians walking to work or school, older adults, individuals with disabilities, children on bicycles, and parents with strollers—making the heart of our community safer and more inclusive. In my two decades of public service in Presque Isle, I have advocated for accessible sidewalks throughout our city. As you can see from the following information pertaining to our public housing program these (and other) improvements are imperative to the health and economic success of many individuals in our community.

#### **About Our Community**

The Presque Isle Housing Authority provides affordable housing to 426 residents in 185 public housing apartments. Our apartments are within walking distance of healthcare facilities, schools, employment opportunities, and retail businesses. It is not uncommon to see tenants walking in the street due to impassable snow-covered sidewalks or to see a pedestrian being drenched from standing water spray from passing cars on Route 1. Unsafe situations such as walking in dark unlit areas with children and walking along the sides of the roads in areas where there are no sidewalks are also commonplace concerns. Improvements aimed at fixing these issues would benefit a diverse group who rely heavily on safe and accessible environments and infrastructure.

The following information provides a picture of who the Presque Isle Housing Authority represents and how this project would impact those we serve.

- Household Composition:
  - 42% of households are single-person households, primarily older adults or adults with disabilities.
  - 179 children live in our apartments, emphasizing the need for safe pedestrian and transportation infrastructure to and from school and recreational activities.
- Average Household Income:
  - Elderly/disabled households: \$15,824.

- Family households: \$27,354.
- Employment and Economic Contributions:
  - 32% of households include employed adults.
  - \$812,530, the combined annual income from wages of our public housing residents, is earned at the many businesses located on Route 1 or a block or two away.
  - \$5.2 million, the combined annual income of our public housing households, is spent on services and retail goods in the project area.
- Transportation Challenges:
  - 50% of working-age adult survey respondents identified lack of transportation as a barrier to finding or keeping a job.
  - 27% of family households have a vehicle, with the median age of these vehicles being 2013.
  - 44% of senior and disabled households have a vehicle, with the median age being 2012.

To further illustrate our community and the impact of safe streets and sidewalks, we have attached a map that highlights key areas that are vital to our tenants' lives:

- Housing Locations (Highlighted Names and circled): These include public housing developments such as Howard Place and Pleasant Hill Manor, as well as private market housing like Everett Heights.
- Work Locations (Red Asterisks): Many residents work at nearby businesses marked with red asterisks, such as Walmart, Dunkin', and local restaurants.
- Schools, Recreation, and Daycare Centers (Blue Circles): These essential community facilities are marked with blue circles, highlighting the importance of safe transportation infrastructure for families and children.
- Healthcare, pharmacies, and social services (Pink Circles): Common services accessed on a regular basis.

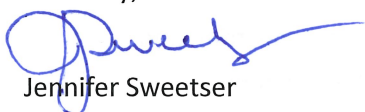
### **Why This Project Matters**

The "Sparking New Life into Maine's Star City Project" will provide an opportunity for Presque Isle to offer safer access to resources and community to all its residents. The impacts on the Presque Isle Housing Authority residents are life changing and necessary. Better curb cuts, accessibility, security, safer intersections, improved lighting and the addition of character and quality of life are long overdue. By tackling long-standing infrastructure issues, the Project supports public housing tenants and the wider regional population.

The Presque Isle Housing Authority fully supports this initiative and is respectfully requesting that the Office of the Secretary of Transportation approve this project to receive RAISE Grant Program funding.

Thank you for your support of our community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like more information about the Presque Isle Housing Authority community.

Sincerely,

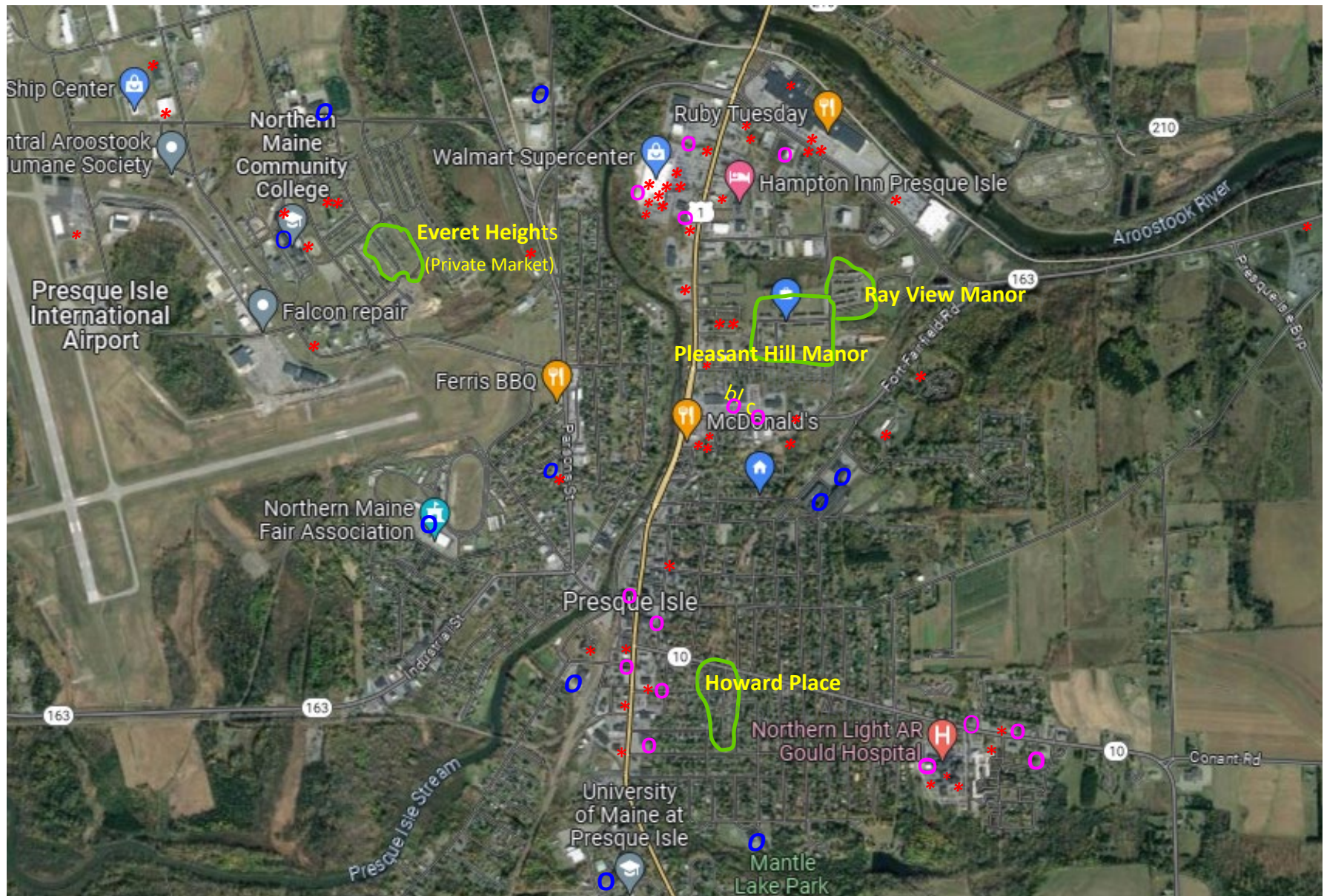


Jennifer Sweetser

Executive Director Presque Isle Housing Authority



# Presque Isle Housing Authority Properties



*\* Employment locations*

*O Schools, Recreation Department and Daycare locations*

*O Healthcare, pharmacies, social services*